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STANDARD OF LIVING IMPROVES IN 1949

FOOD IMPORTS IMPORTANT FACTOR -- Taegliche Rundschau, No 89, 16 Apr 50

Food imports were an important factor in raising Eastern Germany's standard of living in 1949. During that year, 13,600 tons of fat, 60,700 tons of meat and meat products, herring, and other fish, and large quantities of fruits, vegetables, etc., were imported. Most of the food imports came from the USSR and the people's democracies. The USSR alone supplied 12,000 tons of fats, 40,000 tons of barley, and other goods and raw materials.

The people also received a greater supply of industrial products in 1949. The average per-capita consumption of the main industrial products increased substantially compared with 1948. Consumption of textiles increased by 160 percent, knitted goods 150 percent, shoes 110 percent, and socks and stockings, 130 percent.

The total turnover amounted to 11.4 billion Deutsche marks, 13.9 percent above the planned turnover of 10 billion Deutsche marks and an increase of 52 percent over 1948.

The Free Shop system, which was created in 1948, expanded substantially in 1949. On 1 January 1949 there were 31 shops and 19 restaurants; on 1 January 1950 there were 1,140 shops, 203 restaurants, and 428 sales booths.

Turnover in the Free Shops amounted to 2,626,300,000 Deutsche marks in 1949, 19.5 percent above the planned turnover of 2.2 billion Deutsche marks.

The following agricultural products were purchased by the Free Shops:

	1948	1949
Meat (tons)	4,132	26,510
Eggs (thousands)	1,267	7,886
Oil seeds (tons)	7,704	21,024
Grain (tons)	4,850	102,800
Milk (tons)	54,982	186,334

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It is planned to discontinue food rationing in 1950, with the exception of meat and fats. Elimination of rationing will have to be accompanied by improved quality and a larger assortment of foods. It is also planned to increase production in light industry, in order to provide larger quantities of goods for mass consumption. For example, consumption of textiles is to be increased from 103.4 to 169.3 million meters; hosiery, from 114 to 143.7 million pairs; shoes, from 18.5 to 26.8 million pairs; leather shoes, from 3.7 to 6.6 million pairs; and soap, from 11,600 to 23,400 tons. This will mean a 65-percent increase in the per-capita supply of textiles over 1949, a 33-percent increase in the supply of knit goods, and a 45-percent increase in the supply of shoes.

However, increased quantities alone will not solve the problem. It is also necessary to improve the quality and assortment. At present, large quantities of goods stored in the Free Shops cannot be sold because of their poor quality.

In addition to household articles, the supply of certain semiluxury goods will also be increased in 1950. With current facilities it will be possible to more than double the supply of such goods. For example, there will be 226,500 bicycles and 45,400 sewing machines available in 1950, compared with 37,200 and 1,800, respectively, in 1949; also 7.8 million Deutsche marks' worth of watches compared with 4.8 million Deutsche in 1949.

No longer is purchasing in the Free Shops restricted to a small, high-income group. Price reductions have now brought the merchandise in these shops within the reach of the broad masses of the people.

The number of Free Shops is to be increased in 1950, and it is planned that 1950 sales shall exceed those of 1949 by 150 percent. Price reductions are also planned, the first of which, amounting to approximately 30 percent, went into effect on 27 March 1950.

The total turnover planned for 1950 is 15.8 billion Deutsche marks, an increase of 12.8 percent over the 1949 turnover of 14 billion Deutsche marks. [This figure of 14 billion apparently includes the turnover in the Free Shops, whereas the figure of 11.4 billion given above did not.]

TO RATION HOUSEHOLD FUEL --Leipziger Volkszeitung, No 88, 15 Apr 50

By order of the East German Trade Ministry, all households having the use of an area of 10 hectares or less of tillable land, or of a wooded area not in excess of 2 hectares, will be issued household fuel-ration cards for the period 1 April to 31 December 1950.

Rations, based on briquette-type fuel, will be as follows: for households of one person, $4\frac{1}{2}$ centners; two persons, $5\frac{1}{2}$ centners; three and four persons, 7 centners; five and more persons, 9 centners. Holders of supplemental food ration cards in groups A - D will receive additional household fuel allotments of $2\frac{1}{2}$ centners' briquette value under groups A and B, $1\frac{1}{2}$ centners under group C, and one centner under group D. Children up to 2 years of age shall be entitled to the supplements under group D, and tubercular patients will receive an additional 2 centners each. Households in cities of over 50,000 inhabitants will receive an additional 2 centners of briquette value.

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